

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Record of Environmental Consideration.
Construction of a 5 mile recreational trail near the Rocky Point Campground at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Project Santa Rosa Lake.

1. The New Mexico State Parks, in accordance with their Management and Development Plan for Santa Rosa Lake State Park, is planning to construct a multi-use trail, approximately 5 miles in length, 3 feet wide, beginning at the Rocky Point campground and winding along the shoreline of Santa Rosa Lake (see figure 1). The trail is to be constructed entirely with hand tools, utilizing the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) for labor. Construction materials will be derived from on site sources and various interpretive signs will be installed along the pathway. The trail will be constructed following the latest International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) sustainable standards, and will employ "rolling contour" methodologies that have been accepted by several Federal Land Management Agencies. To minimize potential erosion effects and subsequent sediment delivery to Santa Rosa Lake, the trail will not be constructed on slopes greater than 5%. Existing trails constructed at other projects using this methodology have proven effective in minimizing erosion and sediment delivery. There will be no new roads or major infrastructural improvements completed during the project.

2. Santa Rosa Dam and Reservoir are in Guadalupe Co., New Mexico. The proposed location for the new multi-use trail is on Corps owned property leased to New Mexico State Parks. The project will be north of the Santa Rosa Lake Project Offices located approximately 7 miles north of the community of Santa Rosa, Guadalupe Co., New Mexico. The trail is generally located in an area near UTM Zone 13N/NAD 83 527825E 3876350N meters. Access to the project will be from existing paved and gravel surfaced roads adjacent to the New Mexico State Parks Offices.

3. The proposed project is for the enhancement of recreational activities at Santa Rosa Lake. The trail will provide aesthetic view of the reservoir and provide users of the facility hiking and mountain biking opportunities.

4. Congressional authority for the construction of Santa Rosa Lake (previously *Los Esteros Dam*) is contained in the Flood Control Act of 1954, section 203, Public Law 780, 83rd Congress. Authorities to initiate definite project studies and investigations is contained in Advice of Allotment, No. C-27, dated August 3, 1955, Appropriation 96X3122 Construction General. Santa Rosa Lake project purposes are the provision of irrigation conservation storage to meet the needs of the Carlsbad Irrigation, provision of adequate flood control, and the provision of sediment retention for the life of the reservoir project. Benefits directly attributable to the project include only flood control and sediment retention, since the irrigation storage involves only a transfer of irrigation storage currently allocated to Sumner Lake. Recreation is not considered one of the primary purposes of the project. However, development of recreational facilities under the auspices of the Corps of Engineers is authorized pursuant to provisions of the Flood Control Act of 1944. Consequently, the proposed project is in compliance with the authorized use of Santa Rosa Lake.

5. The Corps conducted a literature search of current environmental documentation to ascertain potential environmental issues. There are several federally listed threatened, endangered, and proposed threatened/endangered (TEP) and state listed species that potentially occur in Guadalupe County, New Mexico. The status and habitat preferences for all Federal and State listed species have been reviewed. The project area does not contain any designated critical habitat for TEP species, and no individual TEP or State listed species, or their suitable habitats were observed during our biological survey. Consequently, there will be "no effect" to any Federally TEP or State listed species by the implementation of the proposed trail construction project.

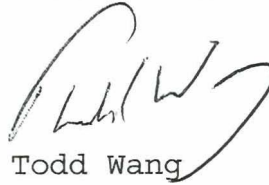
6. On 12/12/2005, a biological survey was conducted at the project location. It was concluded that the proposed trail construction would not impact any significant biological resource. The plant community type in the project area consists mainly of grassland and pinion juniper forest. The project will not affect any waters of the U.S. or jurisdictional wetlands under the Clean Water Act of 1973. The methodologies described in the first paragraph of this document will prevent any increased overland flow associated with the trail construction.

7. Cultural Resources: During the period of November 18, 2005 to January 5, 2006 New Mexico State Parks archaeologists conducted an intensive cultural resources survey of the project area. A complete survey of previous research in the Santa Rosa Lake area was also reviewed by State of New Mexico archaeologists to determine previously recorded sites. The project area contains a total of 5 archaeological sites and 12 isolated occurrences. Of the 5 sites, two were recorded by previous investigators and three additional sites were discovered during the present survey. All five sites consist primarily of small to large non-diagnostic lithic scatters. The 12 isolated occurrences were located in a variety of geographical locations and consisted of lithic artifacts, a cairn with an associated piece of re-bar, and a set of 3 modern hearths. Installation of the proposed trail will have no effect to any properties eligible or potentially eligible to the National Register of Historic Places, with the exception of one specific site. Here, the proposed trail will follow an existing two-track road until intersecting extant, well defined pedestrian trails. Provided the proposed trail follows the two-track and existing trails, the project will have no adverse effect on the site and the project should proceed as planned. If any cultural resources are inadvertently discovered during the undertaking, all work will cease and the New Mexico State Parks Archaeologists will be brought in for cultural resource recording, determinations of significance and impact, and appropriate mitigation measures. All measures in this process will be coordinated with the Historic Preservation Division and will follow Federal guidelines for cultural resource survey, recording and excavation.

8. The proposed action is considered categorically excluded from further National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended [NEPA; 42 U.S.C. 4321, et seq] analyses, and USACE Engineering Regulation 200-2-2, 1988, section 9a: "activities at completed Corps projects which carry out the authorized purposes." The proposed trail construction is being planned under authorized project purposes, i.e., recreational facilities will be carried out under the auspices of the Corps of Engineers pursuant to provisions of the Flood Control Act of 1944, as described in Santa Rosa Master Plan (1977). Therefore, this record of

environmental consideration is appropriate and provides adequate documentation of the proposed trail construction project.

9. There are no anticipated impacts of the proposed trail construction project to natural, biological or cultural resources that would warrant the preparation of an Environmental Assessment or an Environmental Impact Statement. Positive effects are anticipated to visitor satisfaction and increased recreational opportunities at USACE managed Santa Rosa Lake. The proposed project is therefore recommended for implementation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Todd Wang', with a large, sweeping flourish extending from the end of the name.

Todd Wang
LTC, EN
Commanding